

## **Introduction**

This paper is based upon the academic relevance of culinary arts, consumption and design. The ranges of sources are specific to delivery at Buxton with specific emphasis on the Foundation Degree in Professional Culinary Arts – D600 (FdA CA). It will attempt to conceptualise sustainability and perception of culinary arts as a medium of teaching and culture. Elements of culture, psychology, flow and emotional intelligence will be incorporated into this paper and conceptualised to culinary arts. Initial research has shown that there is a wide 'diversity' within the programmes. Investigation has been conducted as to the expectations of the teacher and the student. The research conducted intends to investigate who is marketing what, to whom, and why. Finally conclusions/theories will be suggested as to the future of a 'new' form of culinary artistry within a 20 credit framework.

“Repression is not the way to virtue. When people restrain themselves out of fear, their lives are by necessity diminished. Only through freely chosen discipline can life be enjoyed and still kept within the bounds of reason.”<sup>1</sup>

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1998)

(Source [www.totalarticle.com](http://www.totalarticle.com))

“Culture is a fascinating concept. Our favorite analogy is to compare it to a beautiful jewel – hold it to the light, and reveal its multiple dimensions. Culture is not just a tool for coping, but a means for creating awareness and for learning”. Harris and Moran (2001)

## **Consumption & Behaviour**

Research was undertaken to understand how students perceive themselves, in order to understand their perceptual process in relation to their purchase and consumption behaviour of the programme. In 1982 Sirgy postulated that consumers will only choose a product, which is consistent with their perceptions of themselves, and reject those, which are incongruous with them. The consumption of Buxton's student may contribute to the development of their self image quantified by the holistic purchase of the university and its associated products, i.e. the realistic working environments and employability. It is fair to suggest that there is an iconic image often associated with culinary arts as it is found in many advertising literature, which is memetic in value and nature.

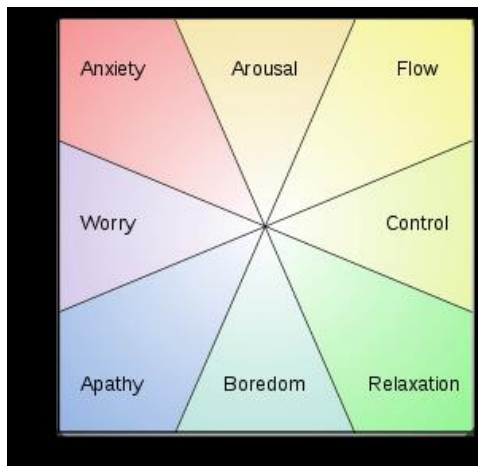
During the initial research 80% of the respondents first thought of cooking & science when thinking of the programme and a further 92% claimed to have purposefully joined because they want to cook and develop their scientific knowledge. Looking into the wider issues of consumption and psychological motivation they are happy to do this and pay extra for the perceived worth merely on the basis of a label. The selection of a product or brand may be seen as an effort to maintain consonance and reduce dissonance. This is intended to suggest that the student will have a fixed focus, i.e. joining the course to cook and by doing so will reduce dissonance by mentally

justifying it as educational as well as recreational thus further reinforcing the notion of an element of the new culture of (culinary) artistic design.

Csikszentmihályi suggested that people are generally happy when they are in a state of flow – a state of mind, concentration or absorption in a particular activity (in this instance practical elements of the foundation degree programme). When engaged in any activity nothing else matters akin to being ‘in the zone’ being a fundamental element of intrinsic motivation or as it is being referred to in this paper emotional intelligence. In this time temporal factors such as food, self perception (ego etc) have no or little relevance.

In order to achieve this Nirvana or flow state, there is an imperative balance between the challenge (assessment or skill acquisition) and the skill of the student. The imperative is that there has to be a happy medium (not too easy or difficult) as this may hinder progression, development and finally flow.

The model below may be used to define and conceptualise flow in terms of intrinsic motivation regarding the emotional attachment of flow to culinary arts modules.



Source : Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1998). *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life*.

In terms of psychological consumption this is specific to internal (guest) causal factors (abilities, emotions and motivation) and external (behaviour of others (host), demands, physical aspects). This is a functional way of viewing attribution process. Heider suggested that the lay person or non psychologist is:

*“Someone who actively tries to make sense of the world, in particular the social world, the world of behaviour.”*

Heider (1958) cited in Gross (2007), pg 3

It is fair to suggest that this is an element of Heider’s attribution theory to everyday psychology of which for the purposes of this section there are two;

- Dispositional or personal (internal) and
- Situational or environmental (external).

Heider suggested that the fundamental feature of common sense psychology is the underlying belief system that underlies peoples overt behaviour are causes and that it is these causal patterns and NOT the way in which an activity is performed that represents the 'real' meaning of what people do.

Demand for and supply of 'culinary arts' beyond that of the traditional services intended for consumption have escalated the growth of the hospitality industry globally, leading to intense competition in the marketplace. Competition has had major implications for the customer, providing increased choice, greater value for money, and augmented levels of service (Kandampully and Suhartant, 2000).

As a case study approach will be used it is fair to contextualise this in the notion of perception using the vision and associated norms and values associated with the delivery of an FD CA programme which has been described as a new form of culinary artistry, i.e. the interpretation of the artistry (not only on the plate). This leads to a fundamental question.

- Where are people's priorities in regards to the concept of culinary arts as a medium of academic rigour?

As we move towards a 20 credit structure with the heightened elements of contract time, practical knowledge and application and employability skills, are consumers or prospective students ready to respond to such offerings?

This fits into the attribution theory as the underlying elements or associated discourses may be applied to the discussion in this paper and is supported by Lewis (2006) highlighting Hofstede's definition of culture as the collective programming of the mind. A more simplified definition defines culture as an organized system of shared meanings and beliefs held by an individual or group (Baron and Byrne, 2000) which, essentially, is a community of practice. By joining a course of study students will join a community of practice which raises other issues of the organic nature of the CoP. However, while being an important facet for dissemination and development of ideas, it is not for further discussion in this paper. Therefore, it is fair to suggest that this leads to an element of cultural (the culture of food and how we understand interpret food) leads to a new cultural sensitivity (Wood and Brotherton 2008).

In this sense of sensitivity it leads to an assumption of emotional state and the buy in of a product or service, in this case the added value or tie in of the artistry of food and psychological tie in.

Figure 1.

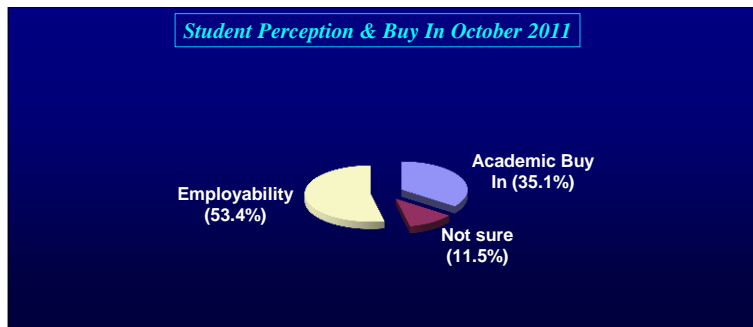


Figure one above shows the percentage of students attending Buxton and their reasons for studying or buying into the product. A key point is the number of not sure responses as it may be fair to suggest that traditional students are cost conscious and turning their backs on the notion of studying thus reducing the emotional buy in/flow state.

This contribution to employment and income is highlighted in figure one as one of the key points of the programme that students buy into as part of the emotional intelligence. This further supports the ultimate tie in or flow state of the rigour of the FD CA programme in that students and feeder institutes are informing us that fees are not high on the list of priorities but rather the employability of the graduate is and that forms the rigour of the programme, skills, PDP, management (social and physical) are key to the success of the programme and emotional intelligence as perceived by the student.

This may be due to an increase of traditional or artisanal products such as food tourism, science and experiential learning which are becoming niche products commonly associated with culinary artistry at The University of Derby in Buxton. This would suggest that there is an idiosyncratic approach to the process or methodology. However, Holt (1967) suggested that it is not feasible to conduct a complete scientific process by studying one individual or organisation.

“In certain of the disciplines concerned with man, from anatomy to sensory psychology, it has been assumed that the phenomena being studied are so universal that they can be located for study in any single person.” (ibid)

Analysis and discussion was undertaken after having entered and researched the field of study. A plan was needed before any research began. There are many texts as to the distinction between pure and applied research. Kumar (1986) suggested that pure research is

"Concerned with the development, examination, verification and refinement of research methods, procedures, techniques and tools that form the body of research methodology".

This study intended to use Kumar's pure research theory in order to expand upon the limits of the author's knowledge by adding to established theory.

A number of mixed methods of research were used to gather and analyse data. Philip (1998) stated that mixed methods use two or more methods to address the same research question at the same time in the research process. Surveys allowed for the collection of qualitative data of the respondents experiences on experiences, and quantitative data as to age expectations. This research attempts to follow Philip's work.

*"Researchers should think beyond the myopic quantitative-qualitative divide when it comes to devising a suitable methodology for their research, and select methods-qualitative, quantitative or a combination of the two-that best satisfy the needs of specific research projects".*

- Assess whether the diversity of a perceived cognition is meeting the needs and expectations of post-modern teaching and student.

Initial research attempted to diversify students thinking/attitude towards flow states by developing a list of factors based upon the works of Clarke, Hofstede & Trompenars.

Urry (1999) referred to post-modernism as a 'new cultural paradigm'. He went on to quote from Lash who defined post-modernism as:

*"A regime of signification whose fundamental structuring trait is de-differentiation".*

This suggested that there is a break down with the distinction between high and low culture, and a breakdown of the barriers between genres and style. Initial research showed that when post-modernity changes in an academic cultural context and are combined with the economic effects of post-Fordism, areas of further research emerged with particular reference to Freudianism.

From this emerged areas of research that could be narrowed down. Questions examined the significance of changing patterns of consumption with examples. Typical questions included:

- Are culinary arts programmes on the decline?
- Is there a link between flow state and the institute delivering the programme?
- How are we responding to the evolving market?

Having used qualitative and quantitative data in all its forms analysis began. Competitive advantage in the future will not be simply based upon the programme's

intrinsic attractions. It will be dependent upon management, and its ability to accommodate trends and develop graduate skills.

A moot point that was raised was the student who is seeking the 'real or authentic' experience. We always talk about realistic working environments (RWE) and how they are reflective of current industry practice and is informed by industry. A potential threat with this is that it is potentially more damaging to natural development and engagement than emotional intelligence.

This made the delivery team reflect upon the trends and movements and adapted the programme via the 20 credit structure to conceptualising food more than just a daily commodification. The team postulated that food is embedded within cultures and had differing ideologies and meanings. Levi-Strauss, (1966) suggested that cognitive ability and consumption is based upon the tribal knowledge and examination on cultural habits such as behaviour and the way people think, classification patterns and their knowledge is a reflection of their collective experiences. This knowledge is an accumulation of past experiences which is influencing current thinking (individual) problem solving and processing. Hoecklin, (1994) described this as a shared meaning which cannot be experienced through our senses akin to flow theory.

Hofstede expands upon these layers by how each person carries around several layers of cultural 'programming'. This means that people make assumptions of what others are really like and how they should interact with people in their own culture as well as different cultures. This inner core of culture is the deepest and most difficult to change and will vary according to how we are nurtured. These 'outer layers' could be learned in the course of education for example working within an RWE because of the perceived value in terms of name, place and spatial awareness (Bardram, 2006).

Furthermore, Fons Trompenaars similarly describes culture in layers 'like an onion'. Suggesting that the outer skin is visible, such as food with the middle layer being norms and values and the inner core being the 'unquestioned reality or RWE' (Joynt & Warner, 1996). This closely aligns to research philosophy of Newton (2001, cited in Saunders et al. 2007) who postulated that research provides a framework for analysis and steps to be followed in order to provide a rationale also known as the research onion

In contrast there are affirmative postmodernists. They also rebuff theories to a certain extent. However, they are less severe and believe that any theory can be adapted. A significant development of the 20 credit structure regarding the FdA Culinary Arts programme was the conception of self-reflexivity. Self reflexivity is the conscious development of the student's position with the ethnographic encounter. During delivery an appropriate response may be an understanding of student cognition by knowledge is doing (kinaesthetic learning) encourages a reassessment of the manner in which the module(s) is conducted, conceptualised in terms of student and lecturer behaviour, problem solving and the process of experience.

In today's society, it may be argued that consumers are being more affluent and are moving away from satisfying their basic physiological needs to fulfilling social and

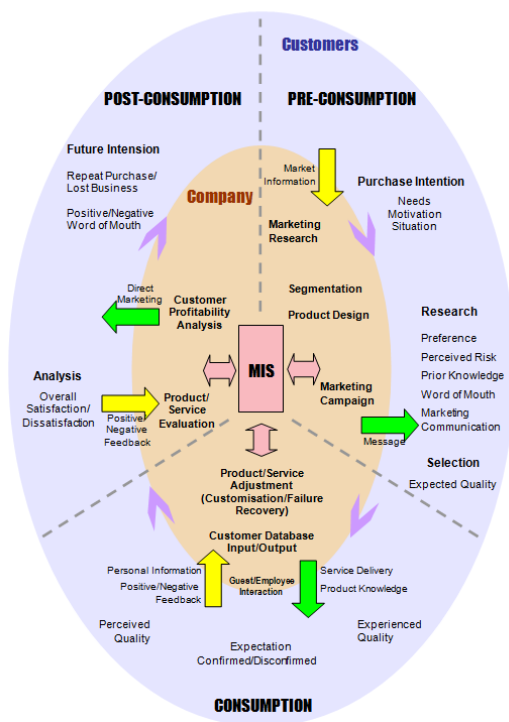
psychological needs (Maslow’s hierarchical model). This is directly influenced by the nation and sub culture to which they belong. This fits with Moscovici (2000:114, cited in Chrysochoou, X, 2004) which seeks to address social psychology in understanding how people are transformed by society and they in turn transform society.

“The field of social psychology consists of social subjects, that is, groups and individuals who create their social reality, control each other and create their bonds of solidarity as well their differences. Ideologies are their products, communication is their means of exchange and consumption and language is their currency” (ibid)

## Conclusion

Consumption begins at the moment students search for information. Therefore it is very important that they are familiar with what is advertised and obtain the right personal information including preference and special needs. Through the interaction with a website or other form of media, respondents already started to affirm or disconfirm their expectations which were formed in the pre-consumption stage and at the same time they develop these expectations further in line with Heider’ expectations.

Information flow and effects



During open days, students are able to encapsulate and participate in the experiential quality of tangible and intangible products and services. During the research questioning the researcher was able to ascertain respondents mindsets when evaluating modules and a programme which is hoped to be deemed of culinary relevance or artistry associated with the expectations and needs of industry and student and how this can be tied to an emotional buy in. Samples of chocolate were provided on plates labelled as Asda, Sainsbury’s the Best and Green & Black’s

organic. The key was that all 3 were of the same low brand basic chocolate. Observational studies were taken when looking at respondent's decision making processes as 90% of those sampled (27 out of 30) chose the chocolate labelled Green & Black's organic but were surprised by the 'deception' in line with their expectations and assumptions.

By using this observational theory respondents pre consumption and post consumption patterns could be observed and monitored. Evaluation to this followed Bardram; Heider; Hofstede and Trompenars works and suppositions to psychology, power distances (ethnographic) and practice vs. quality. This particular process was repeated once more with existing first year students on the foundation degree programme (again with 30 respondents of mixed ages) and the results were comparable thus there were opportunities to make the quality of the experience better or worse as well as obtain feedback. However, it should be noted that this was not a scientific experiment conducted under closed controlled conditions and observational research is open to flexibility and interpretation of the researcher. As consumers they gain more product knowledge through communication of on-site promotional materials and experience leading to a heightened emotional intelligence.

Experiencing these processes repeatedly, recipients may form the overall perceived quality of the chocolate, which results in overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction. However, a key point here is that of ethnography. In this instance although ethnography is normally a subset of cultural diversity often used in the learning environment it is still applicable here as the same mind set of a higher dominance or power distance over their own psyche or merely trying to align to the perceived notion of quality and the intangible assets associated with that, i.e. pride in having chosen to consume a 'premium' chocolate may be viewed as a meeting of altruism and ethnography.

This information is an effective tool to improve student satisfaction/NSS by understanding students and personalising services/support, further re-enhancing the emotional tie or flow state.

Searching for a flow state and the understanding of such a concept is the key to understanding reflective academic practice. There is a need to continually recognise, understand and develop ideas in a fast changing environment. Often there is tension and conflict between the values and sentiments associated with deep-rooted local cultures (the way we have always done it) and the new choices and expectations from students, industry and delivery team.

In order to understand how fragmented students and in some cases lecturers have evolved in a post-modern society attention is required regarding the emotional dimension of the culinary experience. Food tourism & culinary arts becomes a search for coherence, of getting away from incoherence. This tends to be those that know all the time who are prepared to pretend that they do not. This leads to the authenticity of the experience being questionable or bogus. Terminology such as bogus would suggest that a modernist and differential stance is taken. Most post-modern consumers are unaware of this either through ignorance or denial. By being both true and false, it may be acknowledged that any intermediary ground is both or neither, so it no longer



matters. If intentionality is included i.e. students are expected to enjoy and soak up the 'experience' (based on the new fee structure of £7,495 per academic year) an irresistible product is produced. The findings would support this supposition in that the respondents all, when questioned, were happy to pay the fees based on the flexibility or associated intangibles (psychological consumption), RWE, graduate ability and ultimately employability associated with the academic rigour of a foundation degree in Professional Culinary Arts at The University of Derby in Buxton.

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